

provide security for Iraq's nationwide election in just under 2 weeks. Yes, the third successful election which will take place in just a few days.

Today, Iraqi security forces are strong enough to garrison and control cleared areas, as recently illustrated in the leading role taken by the Iraqis in the successful September 2005 offensive in Tal Afar. Both U.S. and Iraqi forces have enjoyed additional successes in eliminating insurgent strongholds in Fallujah, in Mosul, in Najaf, in Samarra, and in many other smaller towns along the Syrian border.

The increasing effectiveness of the Iraqi security forces has inspired optimism among the Iraqi people, and this is reflected in the growing number of intelligence tips from Iraqi civilians. According to reports in March 2005, Iraqi and coalition forces received 483 intelligence tips from Iraqi citizens. This figure rose to 3,300 in August and to more than 4,700 in September. This has translated into further public confidence in the security situation in Iraq.

Simultaneously, the increasing effectiveness of the Iraqi security forces has caused fear and derision within our enemies' ranks. Significant success securing the Syrian border, previously a sieve for Iraqi and foreign insurgents, has made it tougher for Syrian-based insurgents to orchestrate or support attacks in Iraq. As a result, homicide bombings by Islamic jihadists has reportedly been down 30 percent since the October constitutional referendum.

So the military and the security components of the strategy are laid out in the national strategy for victory in Iraq, as stated by the President, and it is due to the commitment of fighting men and women like my stepson, Doug, and his fiancée, but also thanks to the brave men and women of the Iraqi security forces who continue to fight for their emerging democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to look at the situation in Iraq, look at the threat posed by Iraq under the regime of Saddam Hussein, then look at Iraq today. There is no question that we are succeeding.

U.S. DETAINEE POLICY IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MEEHAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEEHAN. Well, Mr. Speaker, if so many of these Iraqis are ready to come up and to provide the security, the police work in the country, then surely there should be no problem with putting American forces into the background instead of having them up front.

The reality is that we have missed a lot of opportunities in Iraq because of a failed policy. Our own State Department polls say that 80 percent of Iraqis view the United States as an unpopular occupier. That is right, an occupier. Forty-five percent of Iraqi citizens

think it is morally okay to attack American troops. So if, in fact, Iraqis are ready to keep security in their own country, surely now is the time to let them do that.

We should have had, as General Shinseki said, more security forces in from the beginning. He said a few hundred thousand troops. And if we had had them there, maybe we could have won the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people from the beginning when Saddam Hussein fell. But the Pentagon and the civilian leadership thought General Shinseki did not know what he was talking about and they put him out to pasture. But the truth is, he knew what he was talking about.

There have been other mistakes made. In April of last year, the shocking photographic evidence of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib became public. In an instant, America's new image in the war on terror was published around the world with photos of Iraqi prisoners being subjected to cruel, unusual, and degrading treatment.

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A report by Major General Antonio Taguba found "numerous incidents of sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses," constituting "systematic and illegal abuse of detainees" at Abu Ghraib. And, unfortunately, Abu Ghraib is only the most publicized case of torture in Iraq.

Regrettably, it has become clear that torture of detainees in United States custody is not limited to Abu Ghraib or even Iraq. Since Abu Ghraib, there have been increasing reports of torture. Most recently, The Washington Post broke a story of secret CIA detention centers around the globe where prisoners were being sent for questioning.

Under the leadership of President Bush and Vice President CHENEY, the United States has given up the moral high ground that we used to occupy as an international leader.

Last month, President Bush defended U.S. interrogation practices, proclaiming, "We do not torture." However, he has refused to back up these words. Instead, he and his administration have vehemently opposed a provision that would specifically prohibit the use of torture as official U.S. protocol.

They supported legislation that would strip the right of detainees being held by the United States to the writ of habeas corpus, an 800-year-old legal procedure grounded in the Magna Carta. Instead of denouncing torture is never acceptable, the administration seems to continually be looking for exceptions to the rule.

In the now-infamous "torture memo," along with other documents, the Justice Department sought to carve out an increasingly narrow definition of detention. Instead of firing administration officials, like Alberto Gonzales, who referred to the Geneva Convention as "quaint" and "obsolete," we have a President who pro-

moted him to the chief law enforcement officer of the United States of America, Attorney General.

By accepting this behavior, the Bush administration has not only hurt America's credibility around the world; but it has put our soldiers at risk.

I have joined forces with a number of my colleagues to try to change this course. However, the leadership in this body has kept us from being heard. We have tried to obtain documents related to Federal investigations of detainee abuse in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo; but our efforts have been shut down by the majority in this body.

Mr. Speaker, 173 Members of this body have signed onto the Waxman legislation to establish an independent commission to investigate these abuses; but nearly 6 months after being introduced, this bill languishes in committee without even a hearing from the majority.

President Bush and the majority did not want the independent 9/11 Commission. They have also opposed independent commissions to investigate the Federal response to Hurricane Katrina. But just like the revelations that came from the 9/11 Commission, an independent investigation into our detainee policy would help us all in the end.

It is time to investigate these abuses. It is never too late to regain our credibility around the world. I call on my colleagues to stand up against torture by standing firm to the belief that the United States has held for generations, that no individual in U.S. custody be subject to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment, any time, any place, anywhere.

CONGRESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARCHANT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, there are two things I want to address tonight, both terribly disappointing to me as a freshman Member of Congress.

As a former judge who sent hundreds or thousands of people to prison for felony crimes, I have heard and seen all kinds of stories. But the one that played out last week makes me both heartsick and very angry. A valiant Vietnam veteran, a man of courage and daring, a Navy pilot, a defender of this country, an ace, a true military leader by example, pled guilty, basically, to accepting bribes to push defense contracts to contractors who may not have been entitled to them.

For those of us who have served in the military, we know what it is to requisition supplies, equipment or services and get quality in response. On the other hand, we also know what it is to receive supplies, equipment or services and wonder who in the world got their bank account padded or their

back scratched to allow such substandard material to be sent.

Now to hear that our fellow congressman, Randy "Duke" Cunningham, was such a Member of Congress on the take makes me both very sad and very angry.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM has made true acts and comments of contrition and humility; but my goodness, how much damage has been done. Not only will he be sentenced to satisfy the requirements of justice, retribution and deterrence, his family and friends will suffer. That is what happens when crimes are committed.

Let us also not lose sight of the fact that the contractors who paid bribes should be barred from ever contracting with the government again. I do not know who it is, and it does not matter to me who they are or with whom they are friends, they should be barred.

But one other thing that has caused me great bewilderment in the last month to 6 weeks or so is the rhetoric against our efforts in Iraq and how it has reached a crescendo and fanatical pitch. In what may well have been the cradle of mankind, the people of Iraq are on the threshold of democratically electing their first permanent leaders under their new Constitution. As a democratic self-governing people, we should as a Nation be uniting in support and encouraging the people of Iraq in their own efforts at self-government.

Some, like our colleague and war hero, Mr. MURTHA, have been expressing concerns of this type about the war for over 2 years. Others have now jumped on the bandwagon, and still others have raised their pitch dramatically. This historic election is 9 days off. It is true that if the election goes well, it not only is a great victory for freedom, democracy and against terrorism, but it will probably help President Bush. It is also clear, and many realize, if the election goes badly, it will probably exacerbate and lower President Bush's popularity still further. But could Members not wait 9 days, wait until after December 15, to make your points about withdrawal or how we are losing and we cannot win.

Obviously, if the people of Iraq think we are about to withdraw before that permanent ink wears off their finger when they vote, they may hesitate to vote or not vote. Heightened rhetoric against our historic assistance in Iraq serves to undermine the election and may assist in its failure. I implore Members, regarding Iraq, please let us put partisan politics aside for the next 9 days until after the election.

Sure, it would make you happy to see President Bush's numbers fall lower; but at the cost of democracy and stability in the Middle East and of our own safety, the price is too high. You can go back to your Bush bashing in 9 days, but how about being statesmen and stateswomen until after the Iraqi election. Show that there is one noble thing you can put above partisan politics for the next 9 days.

We are doing a great good over there. I have seen. Senator LIEBERMAN has seen it. Mr. SHAYS has seen it. We have witnessed it. At this time of year, we can note tragedy as I have tonight, but let us also rejoice in this great thing that may well come to pass next week if you will stop trying to poison it before it happens.

100 DAYS OF EMPTY PROMISES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, today marks the 100th day since Hurricane Katrina came ashore in south Mississippi. Since that time, we have had a mixture of incredible support from the people of this Nation; but also, quite frankly, there have been a lot of promises made by the President of the United States that have yet to be fulfilled.

In 100 days since the storm, numerous regrets by me, Senator LOTT, Mr. PICKERING and others to try to help those people who found themselves in the horrible situation of having a home that never flooded, or a piece of land that had never flooded since the Europeans settled in Mississippi in 1699, who thought they were properly covered by having wind insurance, who thought they had taken adequate precautions to secure their home in the event of a storm, who found that their homes had flooded.

And now for 100 days, I, Senator LOTT, Mr. PICKERING and others have asked to try to do something to help those people. After all, every aid package the President talks about talks about tax breaks for the fat cats. Well, the fat cats are going to do just fine after the storm. They always do. They have got the money; they know how to invest it; they know how to make more money. They do not need tax breaks. The people who need help in south Mississippi are the average-Joe homeowners: the kid who coaches the Little League team, the guy or lady who sings in the choir, who find themselves now at the end of 90 days that their mortgage is due, they have lost their job, their house has been either destroyed or horribly damaged and they are looking for help from their Nation.

This is an extremely patriotic part of the country, and an extremely high percentage of those people have served in the Armed Forces or are presently serving, and all they are asking from you, Mr. President, is a little bit of consideration.

After 100 days, we had taken care of the people of New York after 9/11. After 100 days, we had taken care of the people of San Francisco. Tonight in south Mississippi, people will crawl into two and three-man tents because 12,000 families are still waiting for a FEMA trailer.

The company you gave the contract to, Bechtel Incorporated, has donated

tens of thousands of dollars to your campaign and to the Republican majority. You are obviously friends. I think you can pick up the phone to the Bechtel family and ask them to finish the job.

After 100 days, only two-thirds of the people who have asked for a trailer since their home has been destroyed have received one. I did not promise those folks a trailer. You did, Mr. President. After 100 days, it has turned cold. A shower with a garden hose in August feels pretty good; a shower with a garden hose when it is 33 degrees outside is a pretty crummy experience.

The contracts for debris removal were let on a per-cubic-yard basis. Therefore, the people who did that had an incentive to work quickly because the more they did the more they got paid. The contracts to deliver FEMA trailers was paid by the month. If you pay anyone to do something by the hour as opposed to the job, it is human nature they are going to do it slower. The people of south Mississippi have waited long.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to call your friends at Bechtel and tell them to finish the job. Folks had to live in a puppet for Thanksgiving and their patience has worn thin.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, I remember when the promise was made that you could cut taxes, increase spending, and pay down the debt. I thought that was a bunch of malarkey at the time, and it has turned out to be \$2.4 trillion wrong.

But to come to south Mississippi and to promise the people in south Mississippi that you are going to get them a trailer, and not fulfill that promise or drag your feet on that promise, that is something people see every day. It is something I see every time I go home, and that is every weekend.

Mr. President, it is time for you and the people at Bechtel to do the job: to deliver the trailers that are sitting in places like Hope, Arkansas, where there are thousands of trailers sitting on the runway. Or Purvis, Mississippi, where there are over 1,200 trailers sitting on the ground, or the staging area in De Lisle or the staging area in Hancock County. They are not doing any—any good sitting in the staging areas.

If you have to void the contract with Bechtel, by all means do so. If the Bechtel family has any respect for their good family name, I am asking them as a Member of Congress representing south Mississippi to replace the management you have in south Mississippi and get the job done because the people of south Mississippi and the people of this Nation who are paying for this deserve better.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will